



Fiji Teachers Union Newsletter

(THE CHILD OUR HOPE)

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GREETINGS

***“Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment”-
(Buddha.)***

Warm greetings to all our members. Wishing you all a successful and rewarding Term 2, 2017.

87th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017

The 87th Annual Conference was held successfully at the Xavier College Auditorium in Ba. Guests, delegates and members turned up in large numbers and there was healthy deliberation on the theme. We wish to thank and appreciate the time and effort of all the guests, delegates and members for the support and solidarity shown in the 4-day Conference in Ba.



***Keynote Address by
Sis. Shashi Bala Singh at the
Xavier Auditorium in Ba.***

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Sis. Shashi Bala Singh, the Chief Coordinator, Education International Asia Pacific, was the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker.

In her keynote address, she acknowledged and commended the great unionists and leaders, who have contributed tremendously for building and strengthening the teachers' Trade Union movement in Fiji and had been instrumental in promoting the status of Teachers, Gender Equality, Quality Education and development of a just and equitable society. She stated that EI was fully aware of the challenges faced by the Union in the last decade and admired FTU's resilience. She congratulated FTU for selecting ***“Education 2030: Through Inclusive and Participatory Approach”*** as the theme for the conference which was very timely, important and closely associated with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education i.e. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

She added that the Teachers' Unions together with EI, were globally focussing for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals especially Goal 4 on Education, popularly known as Education 2030 Agenda, including Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 8 on Decent Work.

She shared that EI has played a prominent role in shaping up the Education 2030 Agenda and

that EI has worked very hard to ensure that no decisions were made about education beyond 2015 without the teaching profession's involvement and inputs and succeeded in getting education as a standalone Goal in the Development Agenda.

She highlighted that as advocated through UNITE campaign: quality teachers, quality tools and quality environment were a must to achieve quality education and to ensure quality education for all she called upon the Government on behalf of Education International together with the teaching fraternity in Fiji and globally to:

- *Appoint professionally trained, qualified teachers with decent working conditions and support. Contractual appointments need to be replaced by long term secure employments.*
- *Make teaching profession attractive to get the best talented and motivated teachers in our schools. Measures like reduction in the salaries of newly recruited teachers by the Fiji Government must be revoked. Increases in allowances of teachers in the rural and maritime areas, are welcomed but need regular revision to meet the escalating cost of living.*
- *Properly monitor the teachers' training, update curriculum, pedagogy and methodology on regular basis. The teachers' training institutions should be regulated and monitored by the government.*
- *Develop mechanisms to address the concerns of teachers working in remote areas in consultation with the teachers' unions to retain talent and experience in the teaching profession.*
- *Allow teachers space for academic and professional growth in a democratic environment.*
- *Invest in removing barriers and promoting equity and inclusiveness and effective policies and legal frameworks for the mainstreaming of the marginalised*

and the discriminated sections of the society.

- *Ensure that children in most remote areas were provided quality education in a safe, conducive and child friendly environment.*
- *Value and support diversity and ensure that cultural diversity was respected and supported in legislation, policy, curriculum development, school practices and culture, language of instruction, teaching and learning materials, and teacher training to foster multiculturalism and peaceful coexistence and development of all.*

She concluded that 2017 was the first full year that Governments would be reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since their adoption in 2015 and it was therefore, crucial for all to monitor and review the progress made in implementation of the SDGs, in particular, SDG 4 on Quality Education and take timely action for full realisation of the Education 2030 agenda with increased supply of qualified teachers from emerging childhood to secondary and to ensure that teachers and educators were empowered, adequately recruited, well trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively inclusive and participatory governed systems.



The Presentation of the Token by the Chief Guest to the FTU Family at the 87th Annual Conference in Ba.



***Presidential Address by
Bro. Muniappa Goundar at the
Xavier Auditorium in Ba.***

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Bro. Muniappa Goundar in his Presidential Address stated that the attendance and participation of delegates and members in such large numbers was a show of strength, confidence and unity and that show of solidarity gave Union leaders the strength and drive to forge ahead in these challenging times.

He added that the Fiji Teachers Union was becoming stronger and healthier by the day with approximately 5000 members. He stated that it was therefore, imperative that members continue to show allegiance to Unions, as Unions have the power and zest to bring about accountability and transparency into the system.

The President highlighted on the Conference Theme and focused on the education goals, which was made up of 10 targets, outlining the specific priorities and commitments on the 2030 Agenda. He stated that for Education 2030 to be realized, Education International has called upon the various Governments to embrace these 10 targets. He added that EI has called upon the Governments to “work with teachers and education support personnel.”

Based on this, he stated that FTU calls upon the Ministry of Education to work with the Teacher Unions. He said that the Ministry must revisit its current stand and look ahead for genuine dialogue and consultation with the Unions and other stakeholders in the development, implementation, monitoring

and evaluation of education policies, including the implementation of Education 2030. He stated that the idea that Unions and Unionists were trouble makers hold no water in this modern era and that the Union was an unpretentious partner in education, and any government that neglected teacher union’s contribution was depriving its teacher citizen’s voice in education development.

He stated that The Education Forum should be the “think tank” for the Minister, to assist him to develop policies and plans and the forum should discuss and debate in good faith about the draft policies prepared by the Policy Unit. He added that the “think tank” would provide sound professional advice to the Minister for his consideration and Cabinet approval which would result in an inclusive and participatory education system.

The President dwelt on industrial matters such as the Ministry of Education’s Disciplinary Services Board (DSB), Open Merit Based Recruitment and Selection [OMRS], Incorrect Salary, Transfer Allowance, Congestion of Urban Schools, Job Evaluation Exercise and Executive Teacher Positions.

He also deliberated on the services provided by the Union. He specifically highlighted on the In-House Medical Scheme.

The President concluded that over the last 87 years, Fiji Teachers’ Union has provided invaluable service to the children of Fiji, to the people of Fiji and specifically to the members.

He added that FTU stood tall in all facets of educational development, social progress and membership well-being and that the Fiji Teachers Union believed that for Quality Education and student success, Ministry of Education needs to work in partnership with parents, families, communities and other stakeholders, including Teacher Unions.

RESOLUTIONS 2017

The 87th AGM unanimously approved the following resolutions to be submitted to the relevant authorities for appropriate action. The Secretariat continues to engage in dialogue for implementation of the same.

1. CURRICULUM ADVISORY BOARD

Noting that Fiji Government has adopted “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” thereby adopting Goal 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,

Recognising that Goal 4 cannot be achieved without civil society, including teachers and teacher Unions, playing an active role,

Fiji Teachers’ Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to ensure that there is active participation of teachers in the development and implementation of education policies, plans and curricula through their respective Teacher Unions.

2. TRAINING FOR TEACHERS – INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Recognising that quality education is a human right,

Accepting that education must be provided by the state,

Noting that education must be available freely to all,

Further noting that education should be all inclusive and children with special needs need assistance to achieve their maximum potential and that they learn better when they attend school with their peers,

Fiji Teachers Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to provide more funding towards training of the teachers for effective teaching and learning in “inclusive education” approach.

3. POST PROCESSING

Noting the number of complaints received from the members regarding the questions for Job Tests and the interview processes,

Further Noting that better merited officers have missed out on promotions because of the flawed processes,

Fiji Teachers Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to involve the Teacher Unions in the implementation of processes and procedures for Post Processing.

4. NON-TEACHING TIME FOR SCHOOL HEADS

Acknowledging the enormous responsibility of guiding, developing, monitoring and reporting on teachers and the school,

Noting the time consumed in the paper work and to provide professional guidance, assisting and assessing training needs of the teachers under their care,

And attending to the needs and queries of the parents,

Fiji Teachers Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to reconsider their stance and allow all School Heads to have zero teaching load to enable them to carry out their administrative duties effectively.

5. EXECUTIVE TEACHER POSITIONS

Noting that the 1993 JEE saw merit in making recommendation that 854 Executive Teacher positions be created in primary schools,

Further noting that the recommendation was implemented in 1997 which had since brought in a marked improvement in the quality of classroom work in primary schools,

That this allocation of 854 ET positions was reduced to 427 by the Ministry of Education as a cost cutting measure in 2009, and which had a negative impact on the delivery of quality education,

Fiji Teachers Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to restore the Executive Teacher positions to its full complement.

6. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Noting that teaching methods and Curricula are ever changing,

Acknowledging that new standards for children require that teachers have deep and flexible knowledge of their subject matter and wide repertoire of teaching skills,

Fiji Teachers Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to inject more funds into the in-service programmes and ensure that these programmes are structured and provide opportunities for greater number of teachers to enhance their

teaching / learning skills.

7. ENTRY POINT SALARY - NEW RECRUITS

Noting that teachers recruited in 2015, had been put on ED 9A salary of \$12,360.00,

Acknowledging that the 1993 Job Evaluation Exercise Agreement had made major changes to make teacher grade to be more realistic and attractive by putting graduates on appropriate salaries, namely ED 8A and ED 8G,

Realising that ED 9A salary has made the teaching profession undesirable and that the huge reduction in salary has de-professionalised the teaching profession,

Fiji Teachers' Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to pay the affected teachers their lost salary.

RESOLUTIONS - CHIEF GUEST'S SPEECH

8. CONSULTATION

Noting with deep appreciation that the Government of Fiji has made a political commitment to the Education 2030,

Further Noting that the government has allocated a significant amount in the 2016 budget for Education Ministry,

Acknowledging the numerous initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Education to assist the children,

Fiji Teachers' Union 87th Annual General Meeting notes with concern that Ministry of Education has failed to consult the teacher unions. The AGM calls upon the Honourable Minister for Education to strengthen mechanisms of institutionalised social dialogue with teachers and their representative organisations, ensuring full participation in the development, monitoring and evaluation of education policies.

9. QUALITY EDUCATION

Noting that for quality education we need quality teachers, quality tools and quality environment, Fiji Teachers' Union 87th Annual General Meeting calls upon the Ministry of Education to;

- a) make teaching profession attractive by paying teachers their correct salary and increasing the remote allowances,
- b) appoint teachers on tenure and not on contract.

DUTY HOURS OF TEACHERS

It is disturbing to note that despite numerous verbal and written exchanges, MOE continues to instruct teachers to work beyond normal hours (8am to 3.30pm) without their consent.

While the Union has submitted the case as a dispute to the Arbitration Tribunal, the Ministry has again been reminded the following procedure if it wants teachers to work beyond the normal working hours.

- (i) Seek consent from the teachers concerned.
- (ii) Remunerate them for the extra hours / days of work.

OPEN MERIT RECRUITMENT SYSTEM (OMRS)

As reported to the AGM, the Union had the raised with the Ministry for Public Service, concerns of the members that the system was first implemented without any awareness programme on the process.

The questions in the Job Test as well as the interview were not relevant to the grade of the post. The composition of the panel could lead to subjective decisions. The Union organized a meeting of Southern Division members, the Permanent Secretary for Education and Director Open Merit Recruitment

System who were present made a commitment, to address the concerns raised.

The Union continues to receive complaints from members who are known to be high performing that:

- (1) They haven't been invited to sit Job Tests.
- (2) Have not been called for interview.
- (3) Some were called for interview after they called to enquire why they had not been considered.
- (4) The questions are still not relevant.
- (5) Unsuccessful candidates are not notified.

There is a general perception that numerous outcomes of the process are questionable.

The Union has written to the Permanent Secretary for Education registering this concern. The matter is also being pursued with the Director, Open Merit Recruitment System.

Members must note that if an unsuccessful applicant believes he/she is better merited than the promotee, the process is appealable. An individual grievance can also be filed with the Employment Relations Tribunal. The Union will facilitate.

MATTERS BEFORE THE ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL

- (1) Payment of ED9A salary to qualified recruits in 2015.
- (2) Payment of certificate salary (\$16160) instead (\$18056) to Diploma holders from 2015.
- (3) Duty hours of Teachers
- (4) Non Payment of correct entry point salary to new recruits with letters of completion although they are fully qualified and do the same job as any other teacher.

CASES BEFORE THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS TRIBUNAL (ERT)

There are 6 individual grievances before the ERT. These include promotion, transfer and disciplinary

cases. Of the two rulings in favour of the grievors one has been complied with.

The Ministry has appealed against both in the Employment Court. Other cases have been heard and rulings are awaited.

Victims of the DSB have been re-instated and payments of salary arrears are being pursued. Claims for humiliation, hurt, lost opportunities, etc. have been referred for legal advice.

Aggrieved members need to seek assistance from the Union to file individual grievances.

CONFEDERATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS

The CPSU comprises of FPSA, FTA, FNU, PEU and FTU. The confederation has submitted a Log of Claim for salary increase as well as a draft collective agreement for negotiation. A response is awaited.

As reported earlier a JEE for the Public Service is being conducted by Consultants appointed by the Ministry for Public Service together with the respective Ministry. The CPSU had written to the Ministry raising several concerns on the lack of consultation/involvement of the Unions as well as other issues.

One serious concern is that any post valued at more than 10% of the existing salary will be advertised under OMRS.

This would be most unfair to the person now shouldering the burden on a salary lower than he/she deserves. This is actually a punishment, not a reward!!

The Confederation hopes the concern submitted will receive due consideration.

INHOUSE INSURANCE MEDICAL SCHEME

The Scheme incepted in 2010 has assisted hundreds of members with medical treatment locally and abroad. The benefits have been enhanced on an annual basis. As reported to the AGM the following is to be added from 1st July 2017.

1) Under local hospitalization the limit of payout increased from \$6,500 to \$7,500 plus 50% of the balance of actual incurred cost on approval of private clinic facility for those members including dependents who require medical surgery but are on waiting list at Government operated hospitals.

2) The age limit has been increased from 68 years to 70 years.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

It is pleasing to note that the Union membership has seen steady growth in the recent years. There are however, a good number of those who need to be educated on the benefits. Members are requested to enlighten these teachers on the various services they enjoy. Larger membership means more benefits.

PUBLICITY MATTERS

Members are requested to collect the FTU Journal 2017 from their respective branch executives.

2017 CONFERENCE SPORTS RESULTS

SPORTS	WINNER	RUNNER UP
Soccer	NASINU	NADROGA
Netball	REWA	BA
Men's V/Ball	SUVA	BA
Women's V/Ball	LEVUKA	SUVA

Best Player Soccer	Mohammed Sharif Nasinu
Best Player Men's V/Ball	Wayne Fisher - Suva
Best Player Women's V/Ball	Losalini Vusona Levuka
Best Player Netball	Tevola- Rewa
Best Dressed Team Soccer	Rewa
Best Dressed Team Men's V/Ball	Nadi
Best Dressed Team Women's V/Ball	Rewa
Best Dressed Team Netball	Lautoka



Soccer Champs - Nasinu

